

October 18, 1997

Dear Friends of the Arts:

The night we have long and faithfully awaited is here! Tonight, as Mayor of the City of Newark, New Jersey, I am both thrilled and honored to welcome all of you who have traveled to our nation's third oldest major city, to witness the grand opening of a facility that celebrates the Arts and pays tribute to the cultural, ethnic, social, generational, and religious diversity that make this venue, this city and this state so special.

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) is a dream come true for the City of Newark and the State of New Jersey. On this 18th day of October 1997, we look forward to the exciting future of NJPAC and the many performances and activities that will take place in this magnificent Prudential Hall and Victoria Theater.

Tonight I salute all those who contributed significantly, who conceived, who designed, who built, who funded, who administered, who wrote letters of encouragement and most importantly, those who kept the faith and always believed in the success of this project...this "mission impossible." But, I also want to offer special thanks to the many friends of the arts who never lost faith in the City of Newark and have been enjoying the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra concerts at Newark's Symphony Hall, the former Mosque Theatre, since 1938.

While we sit in our seats this evening and marvel at this exquisitely designed structure, let us remember the road we took to get here. Let us be reminded that this long overdue event, grew from an idea to a possibility; from a blueprint to a design, and finally to a wonderful edifice--one of the nation's renowned performing arts centers--that sits centrally and conveniently in the heart of Newark, New Jersey.

I am extremely delighted to be able to share this night with you, and I look forward to the many more performances that will be held in the metropolitan area's premier performing arts center.

As we admire this architectural gem and the importance of the arts in our lives, we should remember the words of Henry Austin Dobson, who wrote: "All passes...Art alone... Enduring stays to us. The bust outlasts the throne; the coin, Tiberius."

Enjoy! Enjoy! Enjoy!

All the best!

Respectfully yours,

**Sharpe James
Mayor**